



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SUPERVISORS SUPPORT LOCAL BAN AND STATE LEGISLATION TO REDUCE SINGLE USE BAGS**

**LOS ANGELES** – Referring to documented evidence of the negative effects they have on the California environment, Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Zev Yaroslavsky today called on the Board of Supervisors to support Assembly Bill 1998, current state legislation to reduce the use of single use plastic bags.

AB 1998 was introduced in February by Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, (D-Santa Monica), urging a ban on certain stores from providing single-use carryout bags to customers statewide. Stores, the bill states, could sell paper bags if they contain at least 40% recycled content, creating a significant incentive for customers to utilize reusable bags.

“Plastic bags comprise as much as 25 percent of the litter stream, significantly impacting our communities and the environment. In Los Angeles County alone, local and state governments spend over \$18 million dollars each year on prevention, cleanup, and enforcement activities to reduce litter,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

Plastic bags marketed as “compostable” or “biodegradable” have not been proven to readily degrade in the marine environment, but instead are intended to be processed only by commercial composting facilities. Only a small number of cities in the State, none of which are in Southern California, currently support the infrastructure to collect and manage these types of bags.

“Communities throughout the State and around the world are grappling with this issue, and searching for ways to promote reusable bags in order to reduce the impact that littered plastic carryout bags have on their quality of life,” the Supervisor said.

The Supervisor added that despite efforts by Los Angeles County to expand plastic bag recycling programs, only five percent of plastic bags are being recycled. The remainder ends up in landfills or as litter, clogging storm drain systems and eventually making their way to waterways and oceans and threatening wildlife.

Existing law prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing a point-of-purchase fee on each plastic carryout bag at large supermarkets and retail stores that have a pharmacy onsite.

Currently, the County’s State Legislative Agenda attempts to overturn this policy; however it needs to be expanded to provide further guidance to the County’s Legislative Advocates regarding paper carryout bags and other bills relating to carryout bags.

“The County should continue to take the needed steps to promote the transition to reusable bags, which are the most economically and environmentally sustainable alternative,” Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

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